



# Utah State Legislature

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November 7, 2017

President Wayne L. Niederhauser  
Speaker Gregory H. Hughes  
Utah State Legislature  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear President Niederhauser and Speaker Hughes:

The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee (NRAEQ) is pleased to report our actions during the 2017 Interim. You asked us to reach a conclusion and be prepared to report on the following topics:

1. Base Budgets
2. Tour the Bears Ears National Monument
3. DEQ budget impact through anticipated federal reductions
4. Fees review
5. Performance Measures Review
6. Review of individual programs within an agency
7. Consolidate DNR public relations operations with the goal to better optimize its resources
8. Wild Horses and Burros: DWR plant to use the appropriations
9. State Parks: Possible Expansions of Parks and Services
10. Lake Powell: Impacts of a prolonged drought, discuss the Lake Powell Pipeline, water rights and conservation, etc.
11. Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy implementation and how it is protecting values at risk
12. Public Lands Issues and the County Resource Management Plans
13. Water Rights Adjudication: Update on the progress of the Special Master and the Pilot Project
14. Plans for water quality and the potential for harmful algal blooms
15. Impacts from the Gold King Mine spill
16. Air Quality, regional haze, UCAIR status, and EPA regulations
17. Electronic Tools developed by DEQ to see environmental issues
18. Office of Energy Development real estate issues.

You also asked us to do some budget “deep dives” as appropriate under item 1, Base Budgets.

Following is our report on the items you asked us to study.

1. Base Budgets: We instructed the LFA to present on two agencies: The Division of Air Quality and the Division of Water Rights. We also instructed each member of the subcommittee to do a deep dive on agencies we assigned. We heard presentations on almost all the agencies line items covered within the NRAEQ budget.

2. Tour the Bears Ears National Monument: Management committee did not approve this tour.
3. DEQ budget impact through anticipated federal reductions: Will be addressed during session.
4. Fees review: We made significant progress in this area, but found that fee data from agencies needs improvement. We plan on taking action during the general session to require agencies to submit fee data yearly and to have the data quality evaluated by the LFA.
5. Performance Measures Review: Legislators reviewed performance measures in their deep dive. No action taken.
6. Review of individual programs within an agency: Legislators reviewed individual programs in their deep dive. No action taken.
7. Consolidate DNR public relations operations with the goal to better optimize its resources: DNR reported, no action taken.
8. Wild Horses and Burros - DWR plan to use the appropriations: DWR presented, no action taken.
9. State Parks - Possible Expansions of Parks and Services: DNR presented, no action taken.
10. Lake Powell: Impacts of a prolonged drought, discuss the Lake Powell Pipeline, water rights and conservation, etc.: Did not discuss Lake Powell issues.
11. Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy implementation and how it is protecting values at risk: Did not discuss Wildfire Reduction Strategy.
12. Public Lands Issues and the County Resource Management Plans: Did not discuss County Resource Management Plans.
13. Water Rights Adjudication: Update on the progress of the Special Master and the Pilot Project: Water Rights presented, information only, no action taken.
14. Plans for water quality and the potential for harmful algal blooms: Division of Water Quality presented, no action taken.
15. Impacts from the Gold King Mine spill: Division of Water Quality Presented, no action taken.
16. Air Quality, regional haze, UCAIR status, and EPA regulations: Did not discuss individual issues, but did complete a budget deep dive on the Division of Air Quality.
17. Electronic Tools developed by DEQ to see environmental issues: Department of Environmental Quality presented, no action taken.
18. Office of Energy Development real estate issues: We did not discuss Office of Energy Development real estate issues.

Though the committee did not take formal action on the issues considered during the interim, we feel our four meetings were very productive and have prepared us for the upcoming legislative session. Our main focus was on fees and on getting our committee members to do a budget deep dive.

Though we are not where we would like to be in regard to fee data, we at least understand the data limitations the state faces and are actively working to improve the data so that the Legislature is able to make informed decisions regarding price burden on regulated entities and individuals. Furthermore, the new deep dive process proved successful as members of the committee were not only able to become experts on specific budget areas, but found a number of specific issues that they plan on addressing during the Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

Chairs of the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee.

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Sen. David P. Hinkins, Co-Chair

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Rep. Kay J. Christofferson, Co-Chair

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Rep. Scott H. Chew, Vice Chair